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ABSTRACT

To investigate the dissemination of electoral information by the Spanish-language press to the Spanish-speaking population, a study asked several questions: (1) What were the characteristics of the headlines of Spanish-language daily newspapers in Miami and Los Angeles during the 1988 presidential race? (2) Did the headlines of these papers include a Hispanic angle? (3) How frequently did the terms Democrat and Republican or words associated with those terms appear with the words Hispanic and Latino, and in what context? and (4) What was the number of news articles in comparison to the number of opinion columns? Headlines from section one news stories and from opinion columns of two newspapers, "El Nuevo Herald" of Miami and "La Opinion" of Los Angeles, were analyzed during five time periods of the 1988 presidential campaign. Data indicated that both newspapers provided extensive coverage of the campaign, with "El Nuevo Herald" (Miami) focusing more on the Republican campaign and "La Opinion" (Los Angeles) more on the Democratic one; "La Opinion" offered a more diverse editorial point of view compared to the conservative editorial orientation of "El Nuevo Herald"; and both newspapers provided a surprisingly sparse selection of Hispanic angles in the headlines. (Six tables of data and 28 references are attached.) (SR)

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SPANISH-LANGUAGE DAILY NEWSPAPER HEADLINES AND THE 1988 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

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INTRODUCTION

Spanish-language media potentially reach more than 18 million Hispanics in the United States. Spanish-language daily newspapers are a rapidly growing segment of Spanish-language media in the United States. This press is a vital resource for the Spanish-language community for it provides local and national news within the United States, as well as providing extensive coverage of Latin America. News from Latin America historically draws Spanish readers, but so does coverage of state and local events (Veciana-Saurez 1987).

There have been many studies within the field of mass communication that have analyzed how U.S. elections are covered by the media (e.g. Adams 1983; Clarke & Evans 1983; Graber 1980; Meadow 1980; Stene 1937; Stempel & Windhouser 1984; Stoval 1988). But there exists very little research of the Spanish-language press, its political orientation, and the quality of its news coverage.

In a 1984 study by Subervi-Velez (1984), it was strongly suggested that Spanish-language print media do indeed have an influence on Latino political orientations, particularly in cities where Hispanics share a common national origin and/or ideological orientation as in the case of the Cuban population in Miami (Subervi-Velez 1987). Subervi-Velez's subsequent study of the Spanish-language press and its coverage of the 1984 presidential campaign uncovered distinctive structural characteristics of the six newspapers analyzed in five cities across the United States.

The study found that some of the dailies subscribed to a conservative position while others were more liberal or neutral, in regards to the editorial policy and selection of article topics. For example, the conservative newspapers in Miami (e.g.

Diario Las Americas and *El Miami Herald*) covered the 1984 Republican campaign more thoroughly than the Democratic campaign. In comparison, *La Opinion* which is published in Los Angeles gave more coverage to the Democratic campaign. The study found that the newspapers were distinctly partisan, much like the partisan press in Central and South America. While Subervi-Velez's study suggested that the Spanish-language newspapers do in fact tend to have a political orientation, there is still a need to know whether they specifically provided Hispanic angles to their campaign coverage (Salwen 1988).

Since the ethnic angle (e.g. Spanish-language media) in mass communication research has been absent, it is imperative that research be directed in this area in order to access the dissemination of electoral information by the Spanish-language press to the Spanish-speaking population. The urgency of such research is due to the importance of the Hispanic vote in the United States. The election year of 1988 proved to be a worthy one for paying attention to the Latino vote. In a paper by the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (Pachon & DeSitio 1988) the authors stressed the significant impact of the Hispanic vote in specific states (e.g. California and Texas) that held a large number of electoral votes. The authors stated that in a close race in which Latinos voted overwhelmingly for a particular candidate, the race could be decided by the Hispanic vote. Therefore it is important to investigate the way in which the Spanish-language press provides electoral information to its readers.

Does the Spanish-language press present a balanced perspective to inform its readers about pertinent issues and candidates, or does it present a certain political tone which could influence voting patterns? Are specific Hispanic issues defined and covered to encourage political participation within the Latino community?

This paper proposes to address several of these questions: What were the characteristics of the headlines of Spanish-language daily newspapers in Miami and Los Angeles during the 1988 presidential race? Did the headlines of these papers include a Hispanic angle? How frequent did the terms *Democrat* and *Republican* or words associated with those terms appear with the words *Hispanic* and *Latino*, and in what context? Lastly, what was the number of news articles in comparison to the number of opinion columns?

Headlines were chosen for analysis because they provide key indications to the subject-matter in an article. A newspaper headline has two important purposes: to indicate what the subject of the article is about and to highlight its main points. It has been proven headlines have an influence on the reader in that most readers do not read everything in the paper but scan the headlines to decide what will be worth reading. Research by Tannenbaum (1953) has demonstrated how the phrasing of headlines can influence the way the reader interprets the text of a news item. Headlines are syntactically sparse due to space constraints. As a result of the sparse use of syntax, the reader often relies on word associations to clarify an ambiguous headline. In a Unesco study about *race* in the headlines of the British press, it was shown that the word *race* occurred next to a violent, conflict or disagreement word 30 percent of the time (Unesco 1974). The study concluded with a hypothetical situation; if a reader only received news from the headlines, the reader might conclude that matters of *race* are an area of conflict and violence.

It was with these considerations that the analysis of headlines was approached for this paper. The headlines of *El Nuevo Herald* and *La Opinion* were compared and contrasted to show the similarities and/or differences of the two Spanish-language

dailies. Furthermore, the analysis focused on whether or not the headlines were partisan-oriented. *El Nuevo Herald* and *La Opinion* were chosen for analysis because both newspapers are located in areas of the United States with the largest concentration of Hispanics.

BACKGROUND

El Nuevo Herald is the Spanish-language supplement to the English-language *The Miami Herald*, a Knight-Ridder publication. Established in 1976 to address the "Hispanic panic" problem in Miami, it is now the largest Spanish-language newspaper in the United States (Salwen, Subervi-Velez 1988). Spanish-surnamed subscribers receive *El Nuevo Herald* seven days a week as a free supplement to *The Miami Herald*. Eighty percent of the subscribers receive the paper at home. It is also available at news-stands, coin racks and bodegas in predominantly Hispanic neighborhoods.

Since its inception *El Nuevo Herald* has resembled a Latin American newspaper. *El Nuevo Herald* focuses its coverage on Latin America, giving a special emphasis to the region in the editorial and opinion columns. The newspaper also provides coverage of Hispanic issues on the local and state level. *El Nuevo Herald* pays special attention to the Cuban community in Miami. An entire page is devoted to news from Cuba. Frequently the opinion pages are filled with commentaries and opinions about Cuba. The editorial policy of *El Nuevo Herald* reflects the political views of the Cuban Community in Miami (Veciana-Saurez 1987). Opinion columns are often written by well-known community leaders and former political prisoners.

The success of *El Nuevo Herald* is directly related to its growing readership. In 1979, the circulation was 40,000; it is currently at 80,277 Monday through Friday; 210,834 on Saturdays and 94,966 on Sundays. Since 1981, the circulation increase has been dramatic due to the influx of Cuban refugees during the Mariel boatlift and a growing Central American population.

La Opinion was founded in 1926 by Ignacio E. Lozano to provide news for his compatriots who sought news from Mexico. The newspaper has remained in the Lozano family since its inception and serves a diverse Southern Californian Latino community. The circulation is 75,292 Monday through Saturdays, and 60,782 on Sundays. Ten percent of the 75,292 daily copies printed are home-delivered while the rest are sold at news-stands and coin racks (Veciana-Saurez 1987).

La Opinion tries to select articles about Latin America that are of interest to the local Hispanic community. Since the Latino community of Los Angeles is very diverse, *La Opinion* must strike a balance in its coverage of international affairs. The editorial policy of *La Opinion* is generally liberal. The newspaper stands for social justice and defends the rights of the little guys (Veciana-Saurez 1987).

METHOD

The units of analysis were two Spanish-language daily newspapers *El Nuevo Herald*, and *La Opinion*. The five time periods of analysis were chosen to reflect the broadest time range during the 1988 presidential race. The study began with the Iowa Primary in January and ended with the Republican Convention in August. The study also included the Florida and California Primaries in order to analyze both newspapers fairly in regards to the electoral coverage of each newspapers'

respective state. Each time period consisted of one week before, and one week after a primary or a convention. The time periods of analysis are as follows: January 25 through the Iowa Primary to February 15; February 24 through Super Tuesday to March 15; May 31 through the California Primary to June 14; July 4 through the Democratic Convention to July 25; August 1 through the Republican Convention to August 22.

The headlines analyzed came from section one news stories and from opinion columns. The criteria for headline analysis were the topic and the tone of the headline. The headline topic was divided into six categories: Republican (non-Hispanic); Democrat (non-Hispanic); General politics (non-Hispanic); Republican (Hispanic); Democrat (Hispanic); General politics (Hispanic). The guidelines for the analysis of the tone of the headline were divided into three categories: Informative (statement of facts, no value judgement); Pro-active (call to action, mobilization, praised or endorsed); Negative (criticized or not supported).

FINDINGS

During the Iowa Primary, neither *El Nuevo Herald* nor *La Opinion* provided a notable Hispanic angle to the 1988 presidential race.

During Super Tuesday, the headlines of *El Nuevo Herald* were more pro-active than the informative style of *La Opinion*. *La Opinion* used a news format and the only two Hispanic headlines were neutral. *El Nuevo Herald* ran more opinion columns than did *La Opinion*.

El Nuevo Herald' coverage of the California Primary was drastically lower than *La Opinion*' coverage of the Florida Primary. This is interesting to note since the Republican-primary ticket had already been formed by the time the California Primary took place. During the California Primary, *El Nuevo Herald* did not publish any pro-active or negative Republican or Democratic-Hispanic headlines. *La Opinion*, on the other hand, increased its number of electoral articles from 53 to 76, and included more Latino-oriented, pro-active headlines.

Both newspapers increased the number of opinion columns for the Democratic and Republican Conventions, which could be interpreted as an act of mobilization on the part of the newspapers.

In practically all of the Hispanic-oriented headlines of *El Nuevo Herald*, the Cuban vote was associated with the Republican Party, ex-President Reagan and President Bush. *La Opinion* gave more attention to the Democratic Party, Dukakis and Jackson in those headlines with Latino angles. Secondly, when *La Opinion* did provide an Hispanic angle, the newspaper did not cater to a specific regional group within the Hispanic population.

From January 25 through the Iowa Primary to February 15, *El Nuevo Herald* published 15 articles about the elections; 93.3% of the articles were news stories and 6.6% were opinion columns. Two headlines referred to Latinos out of the 15 published news stories and opinion columns. The headline (e.g. "7% los votantes hispanos") was assigned a informative, general, political-Hispanic tone whereas (e.g. "El futuro del cubano: Bush se beneficiara, pero el GOP no") was assigned a pro-active, Republican-Hispanic tone.

La Opinion published 40 articles during the Iowa Primary, of which 87.5% were news stories and 12.5% were opinion columns. There was only one informative, general, political-Hispanic headline (e.g. "Las hispanas y la politica"). There were no pro-active or negative Democrat/Republican- Hispanic headlines.

During February 24 through Super Tuesday to March 15, *El Nuevo Herald* published a total of 48 articles, of which 79.2% were news stories and 20.8% were opinion columns. Nine articles had Latino-oriented headlines. Two headlines were pro-active, Republican-Hispanic (e.g. "Bush defiende el trato especial para cubanos" and "Encuesta: Bush con gran ventaja entre hispanos de esta region").

Between February 24 through Super Tuesday to March 15, *La Opinion* published 53 electoral articles, of which 86.8% were news stories and 13.2% were opinion columns. Three headlines had a Latino angle, of which two headlines were informative, general, political-Hispanic, and one was pro-active, Democratic-Hispanic (e.g. "Voto Hispano Decisivo para Dukakis en Texas").

During May 31 through the California Primary to June 14, *El Nuevo Herald* published seven articles. The only informative-Hispanic headline was (e.g. "Crece el poder del voto hispano"). There were absolutely no pro-active nor negative Republican or Democratic-Hispanic headlines.

Between May 31 through the California Primary to June 14, *La Opinion* published 76 electoral articles; 86.% were new stories and 13.9% were opinion columns. There were 76 published articles and 13 had a Latino, electoral angle. Two headlines were pro-active, Democratic-Hispanic (e.g. "Residentes hispanos de San Fernando anuncian su apoyo a Michael Dukakis" and "Jackson pide apoyo de

los Latinos: Coalicion con la raza de color conduciria al poder, afirma"). One headline was pro-active, Republican-Hispanic (e.g. "Bush aseguro a cubano-americanos que no buscara `arreglos' con gobierno de Castro"). Six of the Latino-oriented headlines were either informative or pro-active, and described electoral participation or a candidate's identification with the Hispanics (e.g. "El voto hispano", "Bush se dice identificado con los hispanos", "Dukakis y el voto hispano", and "Jackson y el voto hispano").

During July 4 through the Democratic Convention to July 25 the total number of articles increased to 49 en *El Nuevo Herald*. There were 85.7% new stories and 14.2% opinion columns. There were two informative, Democratic-Hispanic and two pro-active, Democratic-Hispanic headlines of the ten Hispanic-oriented headlines (e.g."Crean bloque democrata Latino: Gestionara altos cargos" and "Latinos buscan aceso a Dukakis").

Between July 4 through the Democratic Convention to July 25, *La Opinion* produced 94 articles; 86.1% consisted of news stories and 14.9% were opinion columns. There were 11 Latino-oriented headlines out of 94 articles. An example of each type of headline is included. Four headlines were pro-active, Democratic-Hispanic (e.g. "Congresista hispano enfatiza en la convencion democrata que debe mejorar la educacion"), one was pro-active, Republican-Hispanic (e.g. "Bush promete a nombrar a un hispano a su gabinete si gana las elecciones"), five were informative, Democratic-Hispanic (e.g. "Dukakis recuerda en espanol ante sus delegados hispanos, al lider civico Willie Velasquez"), and two were informative, general, political-Hispanic (e.g. "Las convenciones y los latinos").

During August 1 through the Republican Convention to August 22, 60 electoral articles were published by *El Nuevo Herald*; 72.4% were news stories and 31.% were opinion columns. Fourteen headlines were Hispanic-oriented. Five headlines were pro-active, Republican-Hispanic (e.g. "Cubanos lamentan fin de era Ronald Reagan" and "Republicanos hispanos a la caza de votos"). There were no pro-active, Democratic-Hispanic headlines nor negative ones for either party.

In the last period of time between August 1 through the Republican Convention to August 22, 97 articles were published by *La Opinion*; 78.3% were news stories and 21.7% were opinion columns. Of the 97 articles, there existed 14 Hispanic headlines. There were 6 pro-active, Republican-Hispanic headlines (e.g. "Supervisor Gaddy Vasquez, voz hispana en convencion nacional republicana"), one pro-active, Democratic-Hispanic headline (e.g. "Hispanos favorecen a Dukakis"), and no negative Republican or Democratic-Hispanic headlines.

DISCUSSION

El Nuevo Herald and *La Opinion* provided extensive coverage of the 1988 presidential race. Hopefully this information contributed to the political mobilization of Latinos in the cities of Miami and Los Angeles during the elections. The Republican campaign was covered more by *El Nuevo Herald* whereas *La Opinion* gave more attention to the Democratic campaign. *La Opinion* offered a more diverse editorial point of view in comparison to the conservative editorial orientation of *El Nuevo Herald*. Lastly, both newspapers provided a surprisingly sparse selection of Hispanic angles in the headlines.

It can be concluded that *El Nuevo Herald* and *La Opinion* ought to increase the use of Hispanic angles to augment Hispanic participation in the electoral process, and to demonstrate the importance of the Hispanic vote in future presidential elections. Further research will provide insights into how Spanish-language newspapers can improve the dissemination of electoral information to Hispanics. Furthermore, the political mobilization of Hispanics aided by the Spanish-language media will be better understood through future investigation.

Notes

1. The terms Hispanic and Latino will be used interchangeably throughout this paper.

2. *El Miami Herald* was renamed *El Nuevo Herald* in 1987.

	NEWS ARTICLE		OPINION COLUMN		TOTAL NUMBER*	
	LO	EN	LO	EN	LO	EN
1.	87.5	93.3	12.5	6.6	40	15
2.	86.8	79.2	13.2	20.8	53	48
3.	86.	100.	13.9	.0	76	7
4.	86.1	85.7	14.9	14.2	94	49
5.	78.3	72.4	21.7	31.	97	60

LO = *La Opinion*
EN = *El Nuevo Herald*

Time Periods of Analysis
1. January 25 through the Iowa Primary to February 15.
2. February 24 through Super Tuesday to March 15.
3. May 31 through the California Primary to June 14.
4. July 4 through the Democratic Convention to July 25.
5. August 1 through the Republican Convention to August 22.

* = news articles and opinion columns combined

TIME TABLE 1:

	A		B		C	
	LO	EN	LO	EN	LO	EN
1.	10	2	4	1	6	0
2.	3	3	0	0	2	0
3.	10	6	1	0	1	0
4.	0	0	0	2	0	0
5.	0	0	0	0	0	0
6.	1	1	1	0	1	0

LO = *La Opinion*
EN = *El Nuevo Herald*

Time Periods of Analysis
1. January 25 through the Iowa Primary to February 15.
2. February 24 through Super Tuesday to March 15.
3. May 31 through the California Primary to June 14.
4. July 4 through the Democratic Convention to July 25.
5. August 1 through the Republican Convention to August 22.

Parameters of Analysis for the Tone of the Headline
1. Republican (non-Hispanic)
2. Democrat (non-Hispanic)
3. General politics (non-Hispanic)
4. Republican (Hispanic)
5. Democrat (Hispanic)
6. General politics (Hispanic)

Parameters of Analysis for the Tone of the Headline
A. Informative (statement of facts, no value judgement)
B. Pro-active (call to action, mobilization, praised or endorsed)
C. Negative (criticized or not endorsed)

TIME TABLE 2:

	A		B		C	
	LO	**EN**	**LO**	**EN**	**LO**	**EN**
1.	4	6	7	8	7	0
2.	5	2	3	1	2	1
3.	13	15	6	5	3	1
4.	0	1	0	2	0	0
5.	0	1	1	0	0	0
6.	1	3	1	1	0	1

TIME TABLE 3:

	A		B		C	
	LO	**EN**	**LO**	**EN**	**LO**	**EN**
1.	4	0	2	1	1	0
2.	17	2	8	0	0	0
3.	23	0	4	2	5	0
4.	1	0	2	0	0	0
5.	2	0	2	0	0	0
6.	4	1	2	1	0	0

TIME TABLE 4:

	A		B		C	
	LO	**EN**	**LO**	**EN**	**LO**	**EN**
1.	5	2	0	1	1	0
2.	21	9	19	6	16	8
3.	13	10	6	1	1	1
4.	0	0	1	0	0	0
5.	5	2	4	2	1	0
6.	2	3	5	2	0	1

TIME TABLE 5:

	A		B		C	
	LO	**EN**	**LO**	**EN**	**LO**	**EN**
1.	21	14	12	9	16	2
2.	6	3	3	1	3	3
3.	16	9	3	3	1	2
4.	1	1	6	5	0	0
5.	1	0	1	0	0	0
6.	3	3	0	2	2	3

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